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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
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AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3588
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAMASCUS 07323

GENEVA FOR GRIERSON
LONDON FOR MILLIKAN

NICOSIA FOR BEIRUT SUPPORT OFFICE

PARIS FOR ROSENBLATT

ROME FOR EMBASSY VATICAN

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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SUBJECT: SYRIAN-IRANIAN MEETINGS IN DAMASCUS LEAD TO
NEW AMAL-HIZBALLAH AGREEMENT

REF: DAMASCUS 7165

¶1. (U) AN IRANIAN DELEGATION LED BY IRANIAN VICE
PRESIDENT DR. HASAN HABIBI MET SYRIAN COUNTERPARTS IN
DAMASCUS NOVEMBER 3-5 WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SUPREME
SYRIAN-IRANIAN COUNCIL TO DISCUSS A FULL RANGE OF
BILATERAL AND REGIONAL SUBJECTS. ACCOMPANYING HABIBI
WERE IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VELAYATI, HIS ASSISTANT
GHOLAM REZA SAN'ATI, DIRECTOR OF THE MIDDLE EAST SECTION
OF THE IRANIAN MFA MAHMUD HASHEMI-RAFSANJANI, ASSISTANT
DEFENSE MINISTER MUHAMMAD VAHIDI, ADVISER TO THE FOREIGN
MINISTER AHMAD FAS MALIJIAN, AND CHIEF OF PROTOCOL FOR
THE VICE PRESIDENT MUHAMMAD HOSEYN DANYAL.

AMAL-HIZBALLAH AGREEMENT SIGNED

¶2. (U) THE SYRIAN MEDIA ON 5 NOVEMBER ANNOUNCED
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LEBANESE SHIA AMAL AND HIZBALLAH
MOVEMENTS FOLLOWING TALKS AT THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY
WHICH REPORTEDLY BEGAN THE EVENING OF 4 NOVEMBER. THE
ACCORD WAS SIGNED BY AMAL LEADER NABIH BERRI AND
HIZBALLAH SECRETARY GENERAL SUBHI AL-TUFAYLI "UNDER THE
AUSPICES" OF THE IRANIAN AND SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS AND
IN THE PRESENCE OF SYRIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE CHIEF IN
LEBANON, BRIGADIER GENERAL GHAZI KANAAN. ACCORDING TO
THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT:

-- THE TWO SIDES WILL HELP FACILITATE THE DEPLOYMENT OF
THE LEBANESE ARMY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON "IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ABILITY TO ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER."

-- ANY DISAGREEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AGREEMENT
MUST BE RESOLVED THROUGH REFERENCE TO THE SYRIAN AND
IRANIAN PARTIES AND SUBJECT TO THEIR INTERPRETATION.

-- ALL PERSONS EVACUATED AS A RESULT OF AMAL-
HIZBALLAH FIGHTING SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR
"AREAS, VILLAGES, AND HOMES."

-- A COMMITTEE WILL BE FORMED, "COMPRISING BRIGADIER.
GENERAL. GHAZI KANAAN AND (IRANIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA)

AKHTARI," TO SUPERVISE AND FOLLOW UP IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT.

-- FURTHER TO THE APPENDIX TO THE DAMASCUS AGREEMENT (JANUARY 30, 1989), AND IN CASE EITHER PARTY VIOLATES THE AGREEMENT, THE "INJURED PARTY" MUST INFORM THE COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL THEN CONVENE IMMEDIATELY TO "TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO DETER THE VIOLATOR WITHIN A MAXIMUM PERIOD OF 24 HOURS. IN CASE OF A CRIMINAL OFFENSE, THE ACCUSED WILL BE HANDED OVER TO THE CONCERNED AUTHORITIES."

-- THE AGREEMENT WILL TAKE EFFECT AS OF 10 NOVEMBER 1990.

NO OTHER CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENTS NOTED, YET

13. (U) BEYOND MENTIONING HABIBI'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS TALKS AS "SUCCESSFUL AND FRUITFUL" ON HIS RETURN TO TEHRAN NOVEMBER 6, THE SYRIAN MEDIA HAS NOT PROVIDED DETAILS OF ANY SUBSTANTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARD THE STATED GOAL OF "CHARTING A PLAN OF ACTION" TO DEVELOP BILATERAL RELATIONS "IN ALL FIELDS." BOTH SIDES AGREED TO FORM SUBCOMMITTEES TO FOLLOW UP THE SYRIAN-IRANIAN JOINT COMMITTEE'S THREE SESSIONS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION. HABIBI MET WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD (IN LATAKIA) ON NOVEMBER 4, AS WELL AS WITH VICE PRESIDENT KHADDAM. OTHER MEETINGS BETWEEN IRANIAN AND SYRIAN OFFICIALS DEALT WITH LEBANON AND OTHER "REGIONAL AND BILATERAL ISSUES," ACCORDING TO THE LIMITED MEDIA REPORTING.

EXCHANGE OF POSITIONS ON THE GULF CRISIS

14. (C) WHILE SYRIA CONSIDERS ITS SUCCESS ENSURING IRANIAN COMPLIANCE WITH UN SANCTIONS ON IRAQ TO HAVE BEEN THE SUPREME ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ASAD'S SEPTEMBER VISIT TO IRAN, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN FORCES APPARENTLY CONTINUE TO BE AN ISSUE. ALTHOUGH SYRIAN MEDIA HAVE BEEN LARGELY SILENT ON GULF-BELATED ISSUES (SEE SEPTEL ON INFORMATION MINISTER SALMAN'S RECENT REAFFIRMATION THAT SYRIA DEMANDS IRAQ'S FULL AND UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT), WE NOTE THAT IRANIAN MEDIA CITED HABIBI'S NOVEMBER 4 STATEMENT THAT "ALLIED FORCES MUST WITHDRAW FROM THE REGION" AND THAT KHADDAM SAID IN RESPONSE THAT "THE PERMANENT PRESENCE OF FOREIGN FORCES HAS NOT TOLERABLE." THE TWO SIDES ALSO RECONFIRMED THEIR REJECTION OF ANY GEOGRAPHICAL CHANGES IN THE REGION AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR COLLECTIVE REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION. SYRIAN PRESS ON NOVEMBER 7 QUOTED HABIBI'S ARRIVAL STATEMENT AFFIRMING SYRIA'S AND IRAN'S CONDEMNATION OF IRAQ'S INVASION OF KUWAIT AND THE TWO GOVERNMENTS' CALL FOR IRAQ'S UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL.

COMMENT

15. (C) THIS LATEST AGREEMENT TO END THE OFTEN BLOODY INTRA-SHIA FEUDING IN LEBANON WILL LIKELY BE THE PRINCIPAL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS VISIT. UPON HIS RETURN TO TEHRAN, HABIBI LAUDED THE AGREEMENT AS AN ACHIEVEMENT WHICH WILL ENABLE "THE MOBILIZATION OF ALL CAPABILITIES TO CONFRONT THE ZIONIST ENEMY." HIZBALLAH LEADER AL-TUFAYLI ECHOED THIS SENTIMENT WHILE AMAL LEADER BERRI, BY CONTRAST, MERELY VOICED THE HOPE THAT AMAL AND HIZBALLAH MEMBERS WILL BE ABLE TO "RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND VILLAGES."

16. (C) THE ABSENCE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE VISIT MAY REFLECT DISAGREEMENTS OVER THORNY BILATERAL MATTERS LIKE ECONOMIC

ASSISTANCE. OUR COLLEAGUES TELL US THAT ASAD DID NOT OVERCOME THE RESISTANCE TO CONTINUED OR INCREASED ECONOMIC AID TO SYRIA BY CERTAIN HARDLINE IRANIAN CLERICS, BECAUSE OF SYRIA'S 5.5 BILLION USD DEBT, DURING ASAD'S VISIT TO TEHRAN. AS A RESULT, NO CONCRETE TRADE AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED, ALTHOUGH SYRIA IS STILL TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CONTINUED IRANIAN WILLINGNESS TO SELL IT OIL AT BELOW-MARKET RATES. WHETHER THESE REPORTS ARE TRUE, IT DOES NOT APPEAR FROM THE COMPOSITION OF THE IRANIAN DELEGATION OR THE MODEST SYRIAN MEDIA COVERAGE THAT THIS FIRST GATHERING OF THE SYRIAN-IRANIAN SUPREME COUNCIL WILL RESULT IN HIGHER IRANIAN AID LEVELS FOR SYRIA.

DJEREJIAN